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Equipment has been standing idle in a number of brick plants.(2) During the first quarter 1953, brick presses have been idle 13 percent of the working time, causing the industry to fall 35 million bricks behind in production.(1)

For instance, in the Beskudnikovo Brick Plant No 2, equipment has been idle almost 25 percent of the working time, because of poor maintenance.(2) During the first 4 months of 1953, machine idleness resulted in a loss of 2,847 hours, 572 of which were in April. As a result, during the 4-month period the plant fell 2 million bricks behind in production.(5) During the first 10 months of 1953, machine idleness in the plant rose to 13,000 machine-hours because of the failure to make unit repairs.(3) The plant's dry-forming presses are repaired only twice a year.(2)

The above plant is one of the most unprofitable plants of the city's Administration of Construction Materials Industry. In 1952, the plant overspent 1,329,000 rubles, production costs having risen to 22 rubles, 5 kopecks, per 1,000 bricks. In the first quarter 1953, production costs rose to 64 rubles, 89 kopecks, per 1,000 bricks, primarily because the machinery broke down nearly every hour.

In 1952, production costs at brick plants of the city's Administration of Construction Materials Industry exceeded planned costs by 4 percent, resulting in a loss of 7 million rubles. There has been no improvement in the first quarter 1953; 11 of 18 plants have failed to meet their quotas for production costs.(5)

In the Shabolovskiy, Beskudnikovo No 1, and Beskudnikovo No 2 plants, production costs exceeded planned costs by 8.3 million rubles during the first 10 months of 1953, thereby absorbing the profits of plants operating at a profit.(3)

Several brick plants have not been utilizing their full capacity.(1) In 1953, the production level fell below 1952. The Vorontsovo Brick Plant produced 1.8 million less bricks during the first 9 months of 1953 than in the same period of 1952, and the Beskudnikovo Brick Plant No 2 produced 1.4 million less bricks in 11 months of 1953 than in the same period of 1952. A commission from the Ministry of Construction Materials Industry RSFSR found that the latter plant has been operating at the 1948-1949 level. Its quarry, forming shop, and repair facilities were found to be in a neglected condition. This plant has been producing 26,892 bricks per press-shift as compared to 40,663 bricks produced by the Nizhne-Kotel' Brick Plant.

The average output throughout the administration during a 10-month period has been 26,748 bricks per press shift as compared to 26,978 bricks established by norm. The average monthly output of 1,566 bricks per cubic meter of kiln throughout the administration also appears to be near the norm of 1,621 bricks per cubic meter.(3) While the Nizhne-Kotel' plant has been able to produce 2,300 bricks monthly per cubic meter of kiln, the Beskudnikovo Plant No 2 and other brick plants have been producing 1,300 bricks monthly per cubic meter of kiln, or less than half [sic] the rate of the Nizhne-Kotel' plant.(1) The Vorontsovo plant has been producing 1,615 bricks monthly per cubic meter of kiln, which is much less than in 1952.(3)

The city's Administration of Construction Materials Industry supervises seasonal and year-round plants. The Shabolovskiy, Beskudnikovo No 1, and Golitsyno seasonal brick plants have been operating sporadically. In May 1953, the Shabolovskiy and Beskudnikovo No 1 plants produced 18,600 and 23,000 bricks per press, respectively, as compared with 45,000 produced by the Verkhne-Kotel' Brick Plant during the same month.(2) The Shabolovskiy and Beskudnikovo No 1 plants have been producing 1,213 and 1,160 bricks, respectively, per cubic meter of kiln monthly, which is much less than the average throughout the administration.(3)

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The poor performance of the lagging plants has been due not only to machine idleness but also to very slow introduction of new technology and more advanced methods.(1) The administration and its chief, Mal'tsev, have maintained that the lag has resulted from unfamiliarity with new capacities and intraplant shutdowns. (Mal'tsev was reported in Promyshlennost' Stroitel'nykh Materialov, 2 August 1952, as chief of Glavkhrolya (Main Administration of the Roofing Industry, Ministry of Construction Materials Industry USSR)).

Some of the plant laboratories are in neglected condition. The Beskudnikovo Plant No 2 lacks elementary devices and thermocouples, causing the plant to produce during the first 10 months of 1953 only 43.6 percent instead of the 55.6 percent first-grade brick which it was to produce.

The turnover of plant directors and engineers is also great throughout the administration; the administration quite frequently appoints incompetent persons to these positions.(3)

The administration has not hastened plant reconstruction, elimination of large-scale idleness of equipment in existing brick plants (1), and improvement of the quality of brick.(2) Ten percent of the 133,250 silica bricks supplied by the Lyubertsy Silica Brick Plant to the Moscow State University faculty housing project broke in two. More than 35,000 grade-100 bricks had to be downgraded from first to second quality because of chipped edges.(6)

During the first 5 months of 1953, the administration's plants produced only 33.9 percent instead of the 55.1 percent first-quality brick which the plants were expected to have produced according to quota. Having failed to fulfill their 5-month quotas for quality and assortment, the Chermushki Brick Plant and the Krasnopresnensk Combine's silica brick shop each had to pay a 500,000-ruble penalty. The Beskudnikovo Plant No 2 lost more than 3 million rubles due to the poor-quality bricks and blocks which it produced. At the Chermushki plant, five technological [production] lines have not been in operation for the past 3 years, although an additional 20 million bricks could be produced annually from each line.(2)

A similar situation has been existing in the plants of the Moscow Administration of Construction Products Industry. In 1952, the administration's plants overspent 2.7 million rubles for wages alone. During the first 4 months of 1953, production costs rose even more.(5)

Despite the fact that builders have been demanding more products, the administration's plants have been very slow in adjusting themselves to the production of new and economical products.(1)

During the first 5 months of 1953, the administration supplied Moscow building projects with 7,800 cubic meters of reinforced-concrete products above quota, or 34 percent more than in the same period of 1952. During the 5-month period, the Moscow Reinforced-Concrete-Products Plant No 1 supplied the projects 990 cubic meters of products above quota, although only two of its four production lines were in operation because of reconstruction work in the plant. The plant has been reconstructing its steam concrete curing chambers, and 4 of the 14 chambers were to be shut down temporarily during the reconstruction work. The plant now is producing covering slabs 6 meters square. It soon expects to start producing slag concrete slabs, and will convert to this type of production completely.

The Moscow Construction Products Plant No 3, one of whose main products is reinforced-concrete beams, increased its average daily output of beams from 48 in the first quarter 1953 to 69 in the second quarter 1953.(7)

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In 1953, the Moscow Construction Products Plant No 6 will produce slag concrete wall blocks and the Moscow Construction Products Plant No 7 will produce slag concrete partitioning slabs. The plants will obtain the slag from the Kashiri Electric Power Station.(8)

In general, the supply of building materials does not meet the demand. The variety of products is limited and, in a number of cases, the quality is poor.(7)

Because of the increased demands for products, many plant directors stress the fulfillment of quotas and pay little attention to quality. Hence, builders spend time and money to eliminate defects or, more frequently, do not use the products.(2) The supporting columns of some stairways delivered by the Moscow Construction Products Plant No 5 to the Moscow State University faculty housing project were not strong enough, causing the concrete to crack and the metal reinforcements to buckle.(6) Moscow Construction Products Plants No 1, 5, 7, and 8 have been producing especially poor products.(2)

The reconstruction and the expansion of existing small-capacity plants have been lagging. Mosgorpromstroy Trust (Trust for the Construction of Industry in Moscow), to which the reconstruction work was entrusted, has not been fulfilling its assignment.(1) Many of the city's construction-products plants were to have been reconstructed during 1953, yet [as of July 1953] not one of the plants has been reconstructed. Only two of four production lines in the Moscow Construction Products Plant No 1 have been in operation. Reconstruction work also has been delayed in plants No 3, 4, and 5.(2)

Some of the building projects have been lacking reinforced-concrete products because the administration and plant directors have not made the necessary preparations to have enough metal forms to cast the products. The plants have more than 600 metal forms, which is less than half the number needed.

Equipment has been idle in the construction-products industry and the plants have been working unsystematically. During the first 4 months of 1953, excavators were idle about 30 percent of the working time, scrapers and bulldozers, 70 percent, and compressors, 12 percent.

Generally, the construction-products plants have been fulfilling their quotas for cutting production costs, but several plants have been overexpending raw materials, fuel, and other materials. On an average, the industry has been consuming about 8 percent more cement than necessary. The Moscow Construction-Products Plant No 3 has been consuming 20 percent more cement than necessary.(2)

SOURCES

1. Moscow, Moskovskaya Pravda, 13 Jun 53
2. Ibid., 9 Jul 53
3. Moscow, Promyshlennost' Stroitel'nykh Materialov, 12 Dec 53
4. Moscow, Izvestiya, 4 Sep 53
5. Moscow, Vechernyaya Moskva, 9 May 53
6. Moskovskaya Pravda, 23 May 53
7. Vechernyaya Moskva, 10 Jun 53
8. Ibid., 4 Jun 53

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